



First Church in Jaffrey
Weathervane
September-October
2024

Blessing the Animals

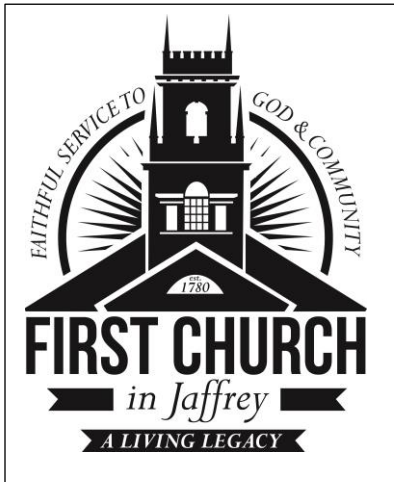
Dear First Church members and friends,

Earlier this year Jill and I lost a dear friend and companion when our 14-year-old Bea-tzu (half beagle/half Shih-tzu) named Kolbi died. In 2010, our then teenage boys chose her, named her, brought her to our Vermillion home, and she has been a devoted part of our family ever since. Her last years in Jaffrey were wonderful. She loved the green, and the neighborhood – full of other people and dog friends (although she acted like she was the queen!)

Funny thing about our pets, I am not sure we really know how much they mean to us until after they are gone. The great spiritual writer Matt Fox once offered an article about his dog Tristan, calling him – his most profound spiritual guide. I think I get that. We learned so much from Kolbi about patience and loyalty, welcome and peace, forgiveness and grace. I miss her.

On Sunday the 6th of October at 2:00 pm, I have again been invited to lead a “Blessing of the Animals” service at the Cathedral of the Pines. This date coincides with the feast day of St Francis of Assisi who is the patron saint of animals. Francis offered much wisdom about how God’s love is revealed through all of creation – including our pets. I want to invite you to join me at the Cathedral that afternoon as we remember all the ways love comes to us.

Peace,
Steve



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2024 September - October Worship at First Church

Meditation text in bold; Call to Worship text in plain font

September 1, 2024

“Do the Way”

James 1:17-27

Song of Songs 2

Communion

October 6, 2024 – World Communion

“Surprise as a Spiritual Discipline”

Mark 10:13-16

Psalm 8

Communion

Neighbors in Need Offering

September 8, 2024

Guest preacher

Leaf Seligman

October 13, 2024 – Indigenous People’s Day

“Crying Out from the Ground”

Genesis 4:8-16

Psalm 90

September 15, 2024

“The Face of Wisdom”

Wisdom of Solomon 7:26-8:1

Psalm 19:1-6

October 20, 2024

“Are Ye Able?”

Mark 10:35-45

Psalm 91

Worship at Meetinghouse

September 22, 2024

“The Back of the Line”

Mark 9:33-37

Psalm 1

October 27, 2024

“A Child of Fear”

Mark 10:46-52

Psalm 126

September 29, 2024

“The Courage to Speak”

Esther 7:1-6

Psalm 19:7-14

Quarterly Meeting

Fall Activities at First Church

Fall Study Series: From Jesus to Christianity

Steve will be leading a study series for five weeks on Wednesday afternoons this fall. These educational gatherings will be held at 4:00 pm in the Parish House beginning on Wednesday, September 18, 2024 (dates: September 18, 25, October 9, 16, 23). The theme of the series “From Jesus to Christianity” will explore how a first century itinerant Jewish spiritual movement became the world’s largest religion. The series will also be available on Zoom with links emailed out via eblast each week. Let Steve know if you have questions. We hope you will join us.

Care and Prayer at First Church

The Care and Prayer Circle is a small group of members and friends who have been meeting recently to organize and support our ministries of compassion and care to others and the world.

In September, we will start a monthly service of mediation and prayer, designed specifically to offer silence and space for us to pray for others and the world. Our first service will be held at 9:30 am on Saturday, September 18th in the sanctuary. Please talk with Lisa Bostnar Jackson or Steve Miller if you have questions about the Circle or the service. All are welcome to join us.

Quarterly Meeting

On Sunday morning, September 29th, we will hold a Quarterly Congregational meeting immediately following the morning worship service. The Trustees will present the first draft of our 2025 Annual Budget, along with plans for our Stewardship Campaign scheduled to begin in October. All members, associate members and friends are invited to attend.

Neighbors in Need Special Offering

First Church is proud of its status in the UCC as a 5 for 5 Church. This designation refers to our yearly support for the NH Conference (a budget item in our operating expenses) and four special offerings. One very important offering is Neighbors in Need which will be collected on World Communion Sunday, October 6, 2024.

The Neighbors in Need theme for 2024 is “Mental Health Justice for All.” In 2015, the General Synod of the United Church of Christ passed a resolution to become WISE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged) for mental health. A just world for all is a world where the human rights and well-being of people with mental health challenges are respected, no matter who you are or where you are in life’s mental health journey.

As you may recall, one-third of the offering supports Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds are used by Justice and Witness Ministries to provide grants to UCC churches and organizations as well as supporting a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects.

Special envelopes will be provided for the Neighbors in Need offering. Checks should have NIN in the memo line. You can also contribute online at the Neighbors in Need website.

UKRAINE REFUGEE UPDATE

From Ilona Kwiecien

“Many still need our help.”

I was back in Poland in May for the sixth time since the Russians invaded Ukraine to follow up on projects that we have been supporting. It is hard to believe the war has been going on for two and one-half years. During this time, much has changed – we have gone from the chaotic crisis of refugees pouring into Poland during my first visit in March 2022 to a more stable environment. About 1 million refugees remain in Poland. Quite a few have gone home, some have moved to other countries. In May a smaller stream of Ukrainians were coming into Poland seeking refuge; I was told that most are being sponsored by family or friends.

Of those who have stayed, some have adjusted successfully to a new life in Poland. However, many still need help, primarily single mothers, older people, and disabled individuals. For the individuals and organizations still providing aid it is harder and harder to secure funding. Indeed, Dom Matki in Warsaw lost their main sponsor who had been paying for the building that housed single mothers with small children. It was very sad to visit an empty home when I met with staff in May. They had to close on June 30, but have raised enough funds to begin renovating a new space. I was told that Dom Matki plans to switch its focus beyond just mothers and children from Ukraine to supporting any and all mothers and children in need.

Lapigua

Stephanie from Lapigua, located in Zamosc, continues to send regular updates/newsletters describing their projects and how our funding is spent. To summarize, since the New Year our donations have:

- Helped their community center, Blonie, provide about 70 packages of food, hygienic products, and other goods per month to people who need this assistance;
- Allowed Lapigua to help put together a special Orthodox Easter celebration in a neighboring town;
- Helped send medicine and medical devices to Ukraine. For example, one recipient was a monastery in Seredne, where soldiers come for mental and physical recovery after serving at the front;
- Supported a children’s home, also in Seredne;
- Purchased a special formula for a baby with health problems. This costly item was beyond the means of the family;
- Provided needed supplies such as building materials to a priest from Kharkiv. That city has been under constant attack and even simple items like screws and switch boxes are needed to renovate damaged buildings, especially hospitals;
- Supported a psychiatric hospital in Luck.

Like other organizations, Lapigua has to work ever harder to obtain funding. Although they received several grants for specific projects, First Church donations still fill many gaps. Thanks to your generosity, we recently sent them \$3,000; some funds went towards sending four Ukrainian children to summer camp (about \$350 per child). The remainder will help support English lessons for Ukrainian children and humanitarian aid both at Blonie and in Ukraine.

Whither from here?

Hopefully with your help we will be able to continue supporting Lapigua for as long as they need it. While I am not actively seeking other efforts to support, if I am made aware of any, I will look into them. I am hopeful that our attention will not be drawn away from Ukraine, which is easy to do, in the midst of all the wars, violence, and natural disasters encountered in today's world. Thank you to all who have contributed, both financially and through your prayers.

Here's a humbling closing story:

I keep in touch with Anton, who used to work for me when I was at the embassy in Ukraine. He is now a lawyer living in Kiev. During our most recent phone call he told me how much our conversations mean to him and that through all that has gone on since the war started, he has found peace in accepting the reality of what is happening and simply doing what he can (pro-bono work, connecting people who need help, etc.) to bring some light into it all.

May whatever we can do help strengthen that light!

If you would like to donate to Ukrainian Relief Projects, please write a check to Refugee Support or First Church in Jaffrey (with Refugee Support in the memo line). This is a community-wide effort that First Church administers. Mail to First Church in Jaffrey, PO Box 673, Jaffrey, NH 03452.



Father Michal Propopiv gets ready to drive another shipment back to Kharkiv.



A young volunteer helps load the van.

A Request from the Worship Circle

There's a long tradition at First Church of gracing the altar with flowers or seasonal decorations. Flowers can also honor the memory of family and friends or commemorate special occasions. Please consider donating altar flowers on a fall Sunday of your choice.

Our local grocery stores have a good selection of flowers, and the church kitchen has many, many vases. You can also contact a florist – we have two in Jaffrey who are excellent designers and know our sanctuary. Colls Garden Center and Daffodils are happy to work with individuals, and they deliver to the church. Our gardens are waning, but they still have grasses, mums, and other fall plants that make beautiful fall arrangements.

Please contact Annie Gordon (sparrowann1970@gmail.com) to reserve a Sunday in September, October, or November. Arrangements can be placed in the sanctuary on Saturday afternoon or early Sunday morning, at least 30 minutes before the service

First Church 107th Fair Celebrates Community!

After a few weeks of drizzle, humidity, and thunderstorms, sunshine and summer breezes arrived just in time for the 107th Fair on Wednesday, August 7. The wider Monadnock community traveled to Jaffrey Center to enjoy delicious food, activities for children, and a unique opportunity for families and visitors to walk and talk while browsing for treasures at bargain prices. Volunteers greeted them with smiles, welcoming all back to the Fair.

The event has many traditions, but it also adds a few surprises each year – in 2024, a Music Tent showcased local performers and buyers found a furniture venture, as well as an expanded jewelry table. Meetinghouse lines were shortened by a numbering system, and benches throughout the Common and First Church ground offered places to sit, talk, and eat.

Under the excellent leadership of the Fair Chairs – Bruce Hill, Janet Grant, and Pauline Brackett – the 107th Fair netted close to \$14,000 after expenses. This event depends on roughly 100 volunteers to set up, sort, sell, park cars, and clean up. While the church's congregation plans and organizes the Fair, two-thirds of the workers come from the wider community.

Donors and sponsors contribute significantly to the Fair's success; they include: Gordon Services, Jaffrey-Rindge Rotary Club, Daffodils Flower & Gifts, Monadnock Disposal Service, Camp Wanocksett, Greg Walsh Auctioneer, Andy & Kathleene Card, Mark & Cynthia Rouvalis, Market Basket, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, River Street Market, Jaffrey Scout Troop 33, Camp Wa-Klo, Hill Family Insurance, Tieger Real Estate

Thanks, and congratulations to all!

Once all expenses are in and the books are closed on the 2024 Fair, the First Church Benevolence Circle will meet to allocate donations to more than a dozen social services and nonprofits in Jaffrey and fund camp scholarships as well as aid for Conant HS grads.

Wednesday,
Aug 7, 2024



GETTING
READY is
half the fun!



CELEBRATING
All who came,
Who donated, Who worked

The 107th SUMMER FAIR
Supporting OUR COMMUNITY



Summer Pie Sales



Beginning on June 28, First Church kicked off its third summer of selling homemade pies every Friday from 2 – 4 o'clock. The two-month effort ended on Friday August 24 and will be missed by customers who lined up each week.

It was another profitable year. On some days loyal “crowd control” assistants Bruce Hill, Steve Miller and Rick Stein had all they could do to keep the people in an organized line. Janet Grant, Dee Poole, and Pat Harmon, all took turns helping to box and sell a variety of freshly baked pies which sold out quickly, often in less than 45 minutes. Kudos to Steve and Pauline Brackett who made four pies every week!

A BIG thank you to all those that helped make this another successful year. Pie sale proceeds, along with Fair monies, will be distributed to nonprofit organizations dedicated to fostering the well-being of individuals and families in the region.

Pam Hill



Thank you to our contributors:

**Steve Miller, MaryJo Marvin, Ilona Kwiecien,
Pam Hill, Bruce Hill.**

Fair photos: Carol Hess, Rick Stein